The Commonweal

March 3, 1950

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Greene and Waugh

Bruce Marshall

The Old Rajah and the New

Jerome D'Souza

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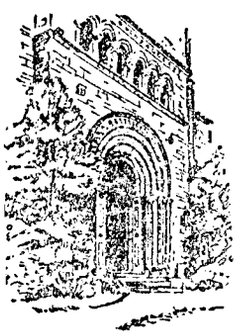

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Mr. Truman to Take the Stump

NO ONE has completely explained the Truman electoral victory of 1948. Clearly, two main factors in it were the say-nothing tactics of the Republicans and the inherent satisfaction felt by millions who were benefiting personally from the New Deal. What is difficult to assess is the effect of the President's own energetic campaign, carried on with conviction in the face of virtually unanimous, well-documented predictions of an impending defeat.

Evidently Mr. Truman has sufficient confidence in his abilities as a vote-getter to plan to take the stump in some fifteen Northern states this fall, when 33 Senators and all Representatives come up for election. The President has stuck loyally to his Fair Deal program and blames the present Congress, and its predecessor, for having blocked its enactment. And instead of trying a Roosevelt "purge" of the Southern members of his own party who have acted with their Republican colleagues in these matters, President Truman seems to be pinning his hopes on the seating of a larger number of Northern Democrats. He has divulged enough to intimate that he has, among others, such Republican strongholds as Ohio, Pennsylvania and the Dakotas in mind.

If the President should take the stump to the extent he now plans, it will indicate his continued determination to put through his Fair Deal program. Such evidence of the strength of his political convictions should have its effects. He has the issues on which to base his appeal to the voters already well outlined. If he appeals to the electorate as he appealed to his loyal followers at the big Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner, he will be talking more of national health insurance and the Brannan Plan than of his consistent stand on civil rights legislation and his present foreign policy. For, as a factor in determining votes, the individual family budget still takes precedence over the upholding of an American ideal or the carrying on of political warfare.

At the dinner the President emphasized the basic concept for which he will be fighting in the 1950 elections: the defense of the American free enterprise system. This was clearly the domestic role of Franklin D. Roosevelt, who never received the credit due him on this score from his political and ideological opponents. But whether the steps he resorted to in the great emergency of the early 1930's will lead gradually to developments which would essentially transform the American system is as yet an unanswered question.

President Truman, because of the war and worldwide reconstruction—and now the cold war—has not been under the same impulsions as his predecessor to take new and farther steps along the statist road. There is no unemployment crisis. Wages are good. Thanks to continuing government subsidies, farmers are well paid for their produce. (It is only that they are becoming uneasy about raising unused food and being accused of wasting the tax revenues which are expended to keep food prices up.) Inadequacy of medical services the nation over is nothing new—in fact that situation is steadily improving on a major scale through voluntary group health plans.

IT IS A STEP like the health plan drawn up for the administration by Oscar Ewing that arouses doubts whether Mr. Truman in the end would actually sustain or weaken our free enterprise system. Resort to national *fiat* before less sweeping, voluntary means of providing decent medical care have had a chance is much more in a statist than a democratic direction. Then the Brannan plan, the other trump in the President's hand in his campaign to elect a Fair Deal Congress, is arousing genuine rural opposition; for one thing the individual farmer does not want to get more of his income from the government than he does from the sale of his crops in the market. It also arouses fears in every quarter that a new federal activity of incalculable cost and extent is in the making.

If, however, the President were to focus his campaign on his fight for civil rights and put it over, he would thereby greatly strengthen the democratic freedoms which he emphatically advocates. That sort of appeal to the nation's voters would greatly clarify the Truman role in respect to the American social system.

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• NEXT WEEK •

CHARLES PÉGUY wrote "The Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc" forty years ago. It has just now been translated into English.

Reviewing the book, FATHER LEO J. TRESE finds that when Péguy thought and wrote of courage, he said something we might well read today. "The capacity to suffer, to be trod upon and to rise again, is something no bomb, however horrendous, can destroy. It will be, so long as men are. Listen to Péguy's Hauviette: 'Every year in the same season the same French peasants do the same work with the same courage, the whole year long the same work with the same patience: that is what holds everything together. . . .'"

Federal Aid: Round Two

THIS is from Evelyn Waugh's article about American Catholicism in *Life* Magazine last September: ". . . there are Americans, resolutely opposed to the mechanics of communism and fascism, who yet exalt this limited conception of good citizenship as the highest virtue, and regard the creation of a homogeneous society as the first end of statesmanship. In this popular neutral opinion, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, atheists, theosophists and all the strange sects of the nation differ only in the rites they practice, or do not practice, in certain buildings for an hour or two a week. This is pure make-believe. They differ hugely in morals, social custom, and philosophy of life—in fact in all the things they value most highly."

The controversy about the Federal aid to education bills, Mr. Barden's and Mr. Thomas', is a case in point. Behind all the argument about constitutionality and separation of Church and State, there is the larger issue—Americans divided by their loyalty to a religious idea, to a philosophy of life, to a way of looking on God and man and the purpose of life itself. This is really it, more than the political argument and the constitutional debate. This deeper loyalty, which naturally involves feeling and emotion, is often expressed in anger and passion. When it is aroused, sweet reason and charity sometime suffer. So, generally speaking, was last year's debate conducted in the murky atmosphere of mutual suspicion, like that of a good Graham Greene thriller, rather than in the cold, clear climate of open political debate and thoughtful decision. The nation echoed with the cry of bigotry, for Americans the most damning indictment, from some angry Catholics. Among some very vocal Protestants and secularists, an old sinister figure was revived—the monstrous Catholic hierarch, shrewd and cunning and reprehensible as Herr Goebbels' Jew. There was also, on the one side, some impassioned if somewhat illogical talk about the Catholic youth who fell in battle, and, on the other, a great deal of irrelevant talk about the Spanish civil war.

Here are two indications of the way things are going this year: *"The issue is not bus rides; it is whether parochial schools, and indeed Catholic churches, belong in this country."* (Editorial in the Catholic *America,* February 18). *"The most important issue before the committee is not the desirability of federal aid to education, which is conceded, but whether this aid shall include, directly or indirectly, assistance from public funds for Roman Catholic parochial schools."* (Editorial in the Protestant *Christian Century,* February 15.) It is just possible that the two editorial writers, each in his own way, was saying the same thing.

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At a recent meeting of the International Council of Religious Education (Protestant), the Rev. Dr. Erwin L. Shaver, director of the Council's weekday religious education, presented a four-point "Protestant approach" to the problem of religious training and public education. He urged his listeners to endorse plans for Federal aid that will not assist private or parochial education. He called upon Protestant churches to insist that welfare services to all children be *administered* entirely apart from the public and other school systems. Direct government aid to church colleges was opposed, but Dr. Shaver has no objections to aid for individual students. Protestant churches were urged to support weekday religious education conducted under church control and in church buildings during time allotted for general education.

Dr. Shaver criticized a growing trend among certain Protestant churches, roundly described as "extremely conservative," toward establishing their own parochial schools. He thinks such a trend might seriously interfere with support of public schools. Protestantism, he said, has a heavy investment in the public school system. It is, he says, "an investment which we confidently believe has paid splendid returns and which we are bound to protect." Catholics, of course will generally rejoice that, in Dr. Shaver's opinion, Protestantism has an investment in the public school system and has received splendid returns from it. It is good to learn that Christianity, even if not Catholic Christianity, has been represented in and enriched by what is sometimes called a godless educational system. Apparently, public education has been doing for Protestantism what Catholics have gone to great expense to accomplish by their own school system.

IN ALL the discussion of Federal aid, this is the first time we have heard it said frankly that what Christianity there is in the public school system is Protestant in tone and direction. Dr. Shaver's statement betrays one more nick in that famous wall of separation, of course; but more and more the wall is beginning to look like a rhetorical barrier against whatever smacks of Catholicism—that is, Roman Catholicism. (It sounds more sinister and alien that way).

One wonders what the reaction would be if a Catholic spokesman said the things Dr. Shaver said: "Catholicism has a heavy investment in the public schools, etc." And if the Catholic spokesman went on, as Dr. Shaver did, and said that the Catholic Church (Shaver said the Protestant churches) has "a right to expect that public school teachers be religiously minded individuals . . .," then what a storm would blow up! "Religiously minded" from a Catholic would be interpreted as Catholic-minded and, therefore, such a demand would be denounced as arrogant interference in matters of state. It seems a lot depends on who is talking. There is a vague feeling that Catholicism might be tolerated in America, but that really, America *is* Protestant.

Dr. Shaver admits that the public school system is a heavy investment for Protestantism and that it has paid off well. Then, in the name of the churches, he makes frankly religious demands on the system. Catholic citizens who are asking for a few minor auxiliary services for their children, not their schools, seem in comparison to be making mild demands, indeed. In an atmosphere less freighted with emotion and suspicion, that might be clear to everybody.

Light

THE stakes daily grow larger in the cold game with Russia. The hydrogen bomb decision made the American people suddenly see how large the stakes were. What we do not see so clearly is that the stakes were long ago larger than the hydrogen bomb. Then as now we are in conflict with Russia over the issue of freedom.

The shock of this hydrogen bomb decision made Senator McMahon propose his 10 billion a year program for social and economic development. It made him warn of the corruption we can bring within ourselves in a power race. It prompted Senator Tydings' appeal for inspected world disarmament. The statements of the scientists' groups were made because the scientists felt that *something* had to be done. The reaction to the President's decision was a demand for a gesture, even if it were to be a gesture that would fail. The London *Times* said "it is the inescapable duty of western powers at least to seek agreement with Soviet Russia on atomic control, however remote the possibilities must appear."

The one theme to this widely felt reaction was that American responsibility was not simply political but moral.

If we seriously mean what we say when we speak of the moral issues in this struggle, there are things that become clear. We are not only containing Russian force, but combatting the Communist philosophy. We cannot buy Russia off. We cannot be content to seek a classic balance of power between west and east, any more than a balance of power with Hitler would have allowed us to ignore Nazism. And the thing about it is that Russia cannot accept a division or static geographical solution either. Communism is a dynamic force and for it truly to accept a settlement would mean a betrayal of its dialectic. The struggle between a moral evil and the freedom western civilization possesses cannot be resolved in a deal or division.

Secretary Acheson has clearly stated the West-

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ern determination to meet the physical aggression of Russia with strength. The many proposals that have been made for a closer union of the free nations deserve to be answered by a program for increased cooperation and resource development. The State Department opposes an attempt to bring political union in the free world because it thinks it would create such new controversy among western nations as to destroy the amount of political cooperation and economic integration which has already been painfully developed.

If the conflict is moral, everything that we do to help the democracies of the free world—to help the new nations who want democracy and the older ones who do not have it—is part of the struggle. If the conflict is moral, Christians must respect and live truth as Communism fears it. Anne O'Hare McCormick recently wrote, "It is that the realm of darkness is extending. Every day more of our fellow mortals are immured where no word of truth and hope can reach them. To produce hydrogen bombs while making no effective campaign to penetrate that darkness at the same time is to prepare for a possible war while losing the actual conflict."

Winning Friends and Influencing People

THE face of the Russian-Chinese treaty has so much Oriental innocence all over it that there is a general suspicion that in sixty days Mao and Stalin must have been doing something else besides composing this testament of noble affection and attending the Moscow ballet. The most credible rumors about the secret sections of the treaty came from Paris, where correspondents gathered what they could from the grapevine that extends from the Eastern satellite countries. Two of the rumors are that Russia will receive a huge Chinese labor force, and that the Russians will take over key posts in the Chinese army and secret service and in Chinese industry.

Though unverifiable, these rumors are believable because they follow the familiar Soviet practice of solidifying power in the satellites by controlling the labor force and constantly indoctrinating local Party leaders—and just as constantly liquidating any of them who deviate from the straight Stalin line.

There are high hopes in the West that Mao will not take this kind of treatment and that he will eventually contract a case of Titoism. While this is possible, it seems unlikely. If there is any deviationism in China, it is more likely to come in the form of non-cooperation on the part of the Chinese people, of whom there are 450,000,000—a "satellite" population nearly twice that of Russia and one that may present vast and grievous internal tensions in the expanding Soviet empire. Here is a satellite unlike all the others, with mass poverty, starvation, illiteracy and low productivity. If we are to judge from past experience, the Soviet technique will be to beat these millions into a soft, pliable pulp and it is possible, we know, for this to be done.

But as the Soviets reach out farther and farther, they draw to themselves more and more diverse racial groups and more of the world's old and nearly insoluble miseries and antagonisms. Russia proposes to rule this world with the hammer, and that, so history and human nature tell us, is not one of the more endearing practices of courtship.

As these potential disturbances multiply, the West can do more about them than simply sit back and dream of Titoism. We can, for one thing, get busy with a program of Point IV aid to other depressed areas and peoples of the world, cutting our trade with the Chinese Communists, and raising to the boiling point all the internal tensions Russia is inheriting.

Why Not Me?

THE PROSPECT of reduced or repealed excise taxes has aroused hopes in many hearts. Congress is under bombardment from all quarters of the business world. Auto makers warn that the continuance of the big tax on their product may bring on a slump in that industry. On February 20 alone the auto industry and makers of light bulbs, household appliances and sporting goods appealed officially for excise tax cuts. The Pennsylvania Railroad, carrying the ball for the other carriers, takes big advertising space to plead, "Why not lift the wartime transportation tax?" Hollywood, harried by the growth of television and shrinking foreign markets, pulls out all the emotional stops. Screens the country over are displaying a short that features Representative King of California, who is seen clutching a bunch of movie theater tickets and explaining that there is a 20 percent tax on every one. He says: "To help the American family, we're out to repeal this tax. It is not based on ability to pay. Even the pennies and nickels of children are taxed."

Before the House and Senate yield to these and other pressures, it might be well if they were to take a few things into account: the current five billion dollar deficit; the cold war and its direct and indirect costs; projected expansion of the nation's social services; the impossibility of making up in some other way the bulk of the revenues that would be lost. With what is at stake today, we shall just have to be mean and keep on taxing even the pennies of our children.

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Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh

Grimness and gaiety and grace in our times

Bruce Marshall

NINETEEN odd years ago when Graham Greene published his first novel, *The Man Within,* his publishers, Messrs. William Heinemann, brought out, almost simultaneously, a novel by Lorna Rea called *Six Mrs. Greenes.* A critic, whose name I have forgotten, wrote that he wished that Messrs. Heinemann could give us also six *Mister* Greenes. Messrs. Heinemann have, unfortunately, been unable to fulfil this critic's wish. Instead Messrs. Chapman and Hall have given us one Mr. Evelyn Waugh. Which leaves us with four still out of the bag and for a long time, I think.

Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh have in common the excellence of their art and their belief in traditional Christianity. They also share the virtue that their orthodoxy does not blind them to the fact that there is precious little orthodoxy either of belief or of conduct left in the world today, and neither of them perfumes reality to accommodate the nostrils of those who would like to pretend that the Kingdom of God has already been established in Port Said. Apart from that, they are both different kinds of novelist, which is not astonishing, since good novelists are always original. Their similarity is that they are both convert Catholics sensitively portraying the not too lovely accidents of the late Mr. H. G. Wells' dream world come true. This combination of faith and perception has surprised secular critics.

The difference between Greene and Waugh becomes apparent when we try to imagine one of them having written the other's novels. It is as difficult to think of Greene as the author of *Decline And Fall* as it is to think of Waugh as the author of *Brighton Rock.* Greene is the chronicler of the grimness of grimness without grace and Waugh is the chronicler of the grimness of gaiety without grace. Greene sees and portrays the ugliness of a world which no longer even knows what it has fallen from, and sometimes makes even that ugliness seem beautiful because of the author's knowledge of the loveliness of which it is the terrible reverse. Waugh, except perhaps in *The Loved One,* shows the essential dullness of those dreadful bright young things who imagined that they had invented alcohol, agnosticism, free verse, zipper fasteners and sin. Both novelists have been charged by clergymen with writing "unnecessarily" about ugly or futile people.

★

THE injustice of this charge may be realized when we consider the writers who were fashionable before the advent of Greene and Waugh and also when we contemplate their contemporaries. Galsworthy, Bennett and Wells all wrote about people unlikely to be invited to tea by protonotaries apostolic and yet their novels were to be found in the drawing-rooms of most deaneries and even peripatetic Redemptorist missionaries read them on railway journeys. *The Forsyte Saga* was largely the not altogether unapproving chronicle of a disintegrating Christianity and it contained the portrait of an Anglican clergyman whose doctrineless doctrines were much more dangerous than illustrated pornography. Perhaps it was because of the suspicion that he wrote literature and was therefore unlikely to be read by Catholics that Galsworthy escaped being bracketed in sermons with holding hands in cinemas and leaving church before the end of the last gospel. And why never a stone at *Tono Bungay* which preached the preposterous lie that the modern airplane would be the harbinger of progress, plenty and leisure?

But let me not be misunderstood: Galsworthy and Bennett were great and sensitive writers and at the time Catholics could produce no novelists to compare with them. There were good Catholic novelists writing, of course, but few, if any, of them ever got down to the hard job of showing the Church of God at work among recalcitrant humanity. Chesterton, for example, never made the sin smell as real as the virtue, perhaps because he wasn't brought up in the same shattered world as Greene and Waugh. But Greene and Waugh never made the mistake their contemporaries made of loving the bad smell for the bad smell's sake. Both learned to speak the language of the moderns without imbibing their errors. It is because of their knowledge of the

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BRUCE MARSHALL *is the author of "The World, the Flesh, and Father Smith," "Yellow Tapers for Paris" and "To Every Man a Penny."*

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language and because they are as good writers as the agnostics that they are read so eagerly by those who do not share their faith.

★

ALTHOUGH Greene is generally a grim writer and Waugh is ordinarily a gay writer, there is never the cold Greene as there is sometimes the cold Waugh. (Of course, to make a pun which is doubly unpardonable for a Scot, the cold Waugh is really the cold war against the stupidity of frivolous behavior.) I don't like talking about novelists having a "message" and I am pretty sure that Mr. Greene doesn't either, but you can't read Greene's books without being struck by the author's insistence on the necessity for pity and on the hope for mercy. *Brighton Rock, The Power and The Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter* are all clement novels. What the old priest says about Péguy to Rose in the confessional is not, in substance, so very different from what Father Rank says to Mrs. Scobie after the suicide of her husband. The whole point of *The Power and The Glory* is the contention that the apparently broken vessel often holds more grace than the evidently whole one. For Greene, and almost certainly for theologians too, the heart of the matter is God's knowing what goes on in the human heart. And Greene himself comes very near to possessing the heart of the matter. I know of no other writer living who so accurately knows what goes on in the hearts of human beings, be they crooks, half-educated young girls or priests. And to this excellence he adds another: that of knowing what is *not* going on in the hearts of his characters. The shallowness of the unfortunately representative Freddy Bagster becomes almost profound because of Graham Greene's knowledge of what is not going on in his heart.

The warm Greene shares with the cold Waugh the knowledge of what goes on in the hearts and minds of clergymen. This is astonishing when we consider that, with the exception of such writers as Compton Mackenzie and the late Robert Hugh Benson, it is quite a long time since writers took the trouble to find out what goes on in the minds of clergymen. Stendhal, for example, was completely clueless on clergymen and I, for one, find it hard to believe that, in an age of theological controversy, Trollope's Archdeacon Grantly and Reverends Harding and Arabin could have had so dim a perception of even the dim doctrines they were required to preach. Mr. H. G. Wells had a shot at it in 1917 in *The Soul of a Bishop,* but, as somebody said at the time, what he showed the public was only the soul of Mr. Wells in the body of a bishop. And more recently that excellent novelist, Mr. Nigel Balchin, who knows all about what goes on in the back rooms of scientists, has shown that, however detailed his knowledge of history, he does not know what went on in the back minds of even Borgias. Mr. Greene has proved in a whole novel about one "bad" priest that he knows how all bishops, priests and deacons think; and Mr. Evelyn Waugh, in a few deft paragraphs in *Brideshead Revisited,* has shown that he knows the same thing. Both are artistic feats which find their parallel only in the portraits of quite different clergymen by François Mauriac and the late Georges Bernanos.

★

I IMAGINE that Graham Greene is more aware than Evelyn Waugh of the unhappiness that there is in the world. Greene knows that bibbing and wenching are not the only sins and that cruelty is the worst sin of all. It is this perception, and not only his language and characterization, which distinguishes his accounts of crime from those of the Oppenheims and Wallaces. Aldous Huxley, if I remember correctly, once said that the difference between *War and Peace* and *The Rosary* was that Tolstoy had a first rate feeling apparatus and Miss Florence Barclay a seventeenth rate one. Greene has both a first rate feeling apparatus and a first rate transmitting apparatus. But if *No Orchids For Miss Blandish* is bad Hemingway, *Brighton Rock* is something more than good Oppenheim. *Brighton Rock* would be good Oppenheim if Mr. Greene confined himself to drawing character and writing English better than the late Mr. Oppenheim and to respecting probabilities. *Brighton Rock* is *great* Oppenheim because Mr. Greene knows of an improbability whose possibility Mr. Oppenheim never knew existed: that the desire to obey "the appalling demands" of God can exist in the heart of a tarted up little waitress.

I suppose that is was not until Mr. Evelyn Waugh published *The Life of Edmund Campion* that it became apparent to fashionable young women in bars that in *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* Mr. Waugh had been satirizing rather than approving their philosophy. If the Scots are slow to appreciate the humor in an apparently serious statement, the English are even slower at appreciating the seriousness that may lie behind an apparently humorous statement. Mr. Waugh seems to have distrusted their ability to apprehend the seriousness in even a serious statement because he prefaced *Brideshead Revisited* with the warning that it was "*not* meant to be funny." I wonder what the yapping young women made of that. I know of at least two of them who read *Brideshead Revisited* as though it were another version of the intelligently amusing but quite unmetaphysical gambols of Miss Nancy

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Mitford. The buffoonery was there, of course, as Waugh himself admitted, but, just as Greene's treatment of crime includes the very real sadness beyond the crime, so does Mr. Waugh's treatment of buffoonery include the very real sadness beyond the buffoonery.

★

BRIDESHEAD REVISITED is historically, sociologically, artistically and theologically correct. Just think of all the things the author got right: Oxford (Mr. Christopher Sykes vouches for that), the army, night clubs, young men about town, convent-educated girls, frivolous young women and Catholic priests. Hooper and the Colonel are as accurate as Cordelia and Father Mackay. Rex is as authentic as Anthony Blanche. The military prologue and epilogue are the real army thing just as the deathbed reconciliation of Lord Marchmain is the real ecclesiastical thing. Like *The Forsyte Saga* *Brideshead Revisited* is the picture of an age, but no picture of an age can be quite true unless the glow of eternity or whatever you like to call it is allowed to shine upon the billiard cue or the cocktail glass. I don't think that John Galsworthy quite understood this; Evelyn Waugh does.

But it is not only because of their superiority to the majority of their contemporaries that I like the work of Mr. Graham Greene and Mr. Evelyn Waugh. It is also because Mr. Graham Greene and Mr. Evelyn Waugh make me want to be holy, while the writers of the holy books so often make me want to commit bigamy, become a Communist or steal a jet airplane. J. K. Huysmans knew the reason for this and I hope that you do too, but, in case you don't, I'll tell you: Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh make me want to be holy because they write good English, draw character accurately and present a whole world for me to read about; and that is why I very respectfully salute them.

In New Delhi: The Old Rajah and the New

India makes a hard choice between "the man she admires and the man she loves."

Jerome D'Souza

IN INDIA more than in other countries, personalities count for far more in politics and religion than programs and doctrines. This is inherent in traditional Hindu thought and sentiment. Guru worship, or veneration for the Master, is a recognized feature of Hindu life. The disciple is expected to leave home and parents and cling to the Guru as his servant, disciple, and son, until such time as his initiation is completed. When a man is recognized as a teacher or a holy man, he is no longer bound by the ordinary prescriptions and sanctions of caste and social life. He is above law. He is to be obeyed even if he gives puzzling commands—*he* should know best. That is why Hindu India of the higher castes has bowed down before ascetics of inferior caste, even, in one or two instances, before Gurus who were Untouchables or outcastes. The whole of India was at Mahatma Gandhi's feet though he was of the Bunya, a relatively inferior, caste. There is a saying current among Hindus: "To be purified by sacred shrines and sacred rivers you must visit them and bathe in them. But to be purified by a holy man, it is enough to look on him."

When India has to make a choice between *two* good men it is always fascinating to inquire into the ultimate reasons for the choice. The people of India, speaking through the Constituent Assembly, have just made such a choice. They have replaced the Governor General, Chakravarti Rajagopalachariar, with Rajendra Prasad, as first President of the Republic of India. Many reasons must have inspired the decision. But if we had to choose the salient one, I think it would be right to say that India has bidden farewell—possibly for a time only—to the man she admires, in order to honor the man she loves.

Until the 26th of January India, though in fact independent, was in theory a Dominion of the British Commonwealth and the Governor General held office in the name of the King of England. Under its new status, India, while remaining a member of the Commonwealth, gives up its allegiance to the English monarch, though it will continue to recognize him as the First Citizen of the Commonwealth and symbol of the union of the different States that constitute it.

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This peculiar solution, which has achieved the apparently impossible task of preserving the unity of the Commonwealth without wounding the pride of India, was a result of the statesmanship of Pandit Nehru and the genius for compromise of the British.

In this happy settlement there was only one element of surprise. Till almost the eve of the election it was confidently expected that the very able man who had filled the role of Governor General during the transition period with consummate tact would be elected President. But the Constituent Assembly, India's sovereign legislative body, in an uncontested election chose Rajendra Prasad, who was till then the President of the Assembly. By a curious coincidence both these men are named "Rajah," the Sanskrit word for King, cognate of the Latin "Rex." Rajaji, as he is familiarly known to the masses, passes into retirement and the much loved Rajen Babu steps into the "Gadi." What kind of men are these two, the old and the new Rajah?

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THE retiring leader is a man of outstanding intellectual ability, having one of the most cultivated minds among the prominent men of India. A Brahmin from the South, he belongs to the community of which the level of intelligence and education is perhaps the highest in India. They have distinguished themselves in all the learned professions and have given to renascent India some of its greatest scholars, scientists, mathematicians, and constitutional experts. Rajaji was a brilliant lawyer in his early years until he gave up everything to follow Mahatma Gandhi. He took part in all the great Congress campaigns for political emancipation, and made history by an exceptionally successful term of office as Premier of Madras in the late thirties. At the outbreak of the war the Congress Ministries went out of office and Rajaji, like other Congress leaders, went into the political wilderness till 1945.

I said "like other Congress leaders," but in reality not quite like the others. He had resigned as Premier with some reluctance because he believed that in spite of the blunder of Britain in not consulting the Indian people before declaring war in their name, the cause of Britain was just and that more was to be gained by continuing in office and cooperating with the war effort than by aloofness. When this Congress aloofness became positive opposition in 1942, Rajaji, a man of very great courage and uprightness, could not bring himself to approve the policy of the Congress Party. He severed his connection with the organization, while of course remaining in close touch with Mahatma Gandhi, whose son, Devdas Gandhi, had married a daughter of Rajaji. This brought him a good deal of odium from the more revolutionary elements in the country. But Rajaji has never courted popularity and never feared criticism. As in war policy, so in regard to the Hindu-Moslem problem, he went counter to current opinion. He was one of the earliest to recognize that there would be no solution of the Indian political problem without a considerable concession to the separatist demands of Mr. Jinnah.

The Congress Party, however, could not dispense definitely with the services of so able and so courageous a man, and when peace returned he was recalled to high office in the Central Government.

Rajaji is a fascinating speaker. A man of unusual literary ability both in his native Tamil and in English, he resembles his master, Gandhi, in his use of restrained language, pure and vigorous, occasionally enlivened by a striking comparison or ingenious parable. With his subtle intelligence, there is no literary and logical device which is not employed to expose, refute and persuade. He begins slowly, almost haltingly, and winds his way into his subject step by step. He has a clear and penetrating voice which could be harsh if he did not control and modulate it carefully. He conjures his spell gradually but before he ends, it is complete. Opposition is lulled into acquiescence and mild agreement hardens into conviction. The process is mainly intellectual. The emotions are kept strictly under control. In fact Rajaji has the reputation of being cold and unemotional. I believe he is naturally a warmhearted man. He has a gift for friendship, and his attachments are deep and lasting. But he mistrusts enthusiasm. By religious inclination and by self-discipline he has become something of a stoic, not elated by success and not depressed by failure.

How comes it that a man of this stamp and stature has not been retained in public life in the only position in which it was possible for him to remain? What are the reasons for the Assembly's choice which ends the public career of a man of great intelligence, iron will, and austere life? Possibly Rajaji's own oft-expressed desire to withdraw and give himself up to the philosophic and religious studies in which he delights had something to do with it. He is 75 years old, while Rajen Babu is considerably younger. It must, nevertheless, have seemed to the Indian Parliament that the man who had guided them in drawing up the Constitution, who knew the contents and the spirit of it better than anyone else, was best suited to see to the enforcement of it in its first stages. It was also a deserved reward for a life of singular purity and devotion. Was there not also the play of provincial sentiment in this election, the desire of the northerners to retain this unique honor and crucial position for a man from the North in preference

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to one from the South, always considered to be somewhat outside the center of Indian political life and not quite authentic as an expression of the spirit of New India? It is very probable that this feeling had its part in determining the choice.

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RAJENDRA PRASAD is a Brahmin from Bihar. Bihar, along with the present United Province of Agra and Oudh, occupies the Ganges plain, which in classical times was the very heart of India. These provinces formed the ancient Bharata or Aryavarta, the land of classical Sanskrit literature, the home of the earliest and the most characteristic speculations of Hinduism. It is the region watered by the Ganges and its tributaries, the most sacred of all rivers to the devout Hindu. In sober truth this Middle Country, Madhyadesha, has not always retained its intellectual and religious leadership through the ages. That leadership has passed, in the course of the varied history of India, to all the different provinces at different epochs, to Bengal, to Maharashtra, to the Tamil country, to Gujarat, according as the great teachers and thinkers rose in each of these provinces. But ancient Bharatavarsha has never forgotten its early primacy. It has taken a prominent part in the national struggle. It was the leader in the fight for Hindi as the national language. It willingly believes that it has the true Hindu spirit more than other parts of India. There is no doubt that the very large and influential group of Legislators from the United Province and Bihar wanted to make an authentic son of their land the first President.

They found in Rajendra Prasad a man acceptable to every province of India and one of the best loved figures in Indian public life. Though he does not give the impression of intellectual force that Rajaji does, he too is a man of great gifts who had an exceptionally brilliant academic career. It is curious to note that he began professional life as a Lecturer in English in a University College and then went over to the practice of Law. Like so many successful lawyers, he gave up his practice at Mahatma Gandhi's call in the early days of mass Satygraha, and since then has been one of the most faithful, loyal, and respected members of the Congress Party, closely working with Mahatma Gandhi whose political, religious, and social ideals he shared to the full. He has been President of the National Congress—a year's term of office—more often than any other leader.

In the great Bihar earthquake, which brought death and misery to thousands in his native province, he distinguished himself by his immense devotion and organizing capacity in giving relief. In the national cabinet, first formed in 1945, he was Minister for Food and Agriculture. When the Constituent Assembly met for the first time in Delhi in December, 1946, he was unanimously elected President. Except for one fairly long interval when ill health compelled him to absent himself and entrust the work to the Christian Vice-President of the Assembly, Dr. H. C. Mukerjee, he has guided the deliberations of the constitution-making body with tact and courtesy.

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RAJENDRA PRASAD is in some ways strikingly different from his predecessor. Both of them are convinced and devout Hindus who give a good deal of their time to the reading of Hindu scriptures and to prayer. They are, moreover, very devoted to the memory as well as to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. But Rajendra Prasad has none of the sternness, the appearance of hardness which Rajaji, for all his courtesy, could not sometimes help showing. Rajen Babu is a gentle soul, who receives everyone with a child-like and disarming smile. The most unselfish of men, personal ambition has never played any part in his long and honorable career. It is certain that only pressure from friends and the sense of duty to India at a critical time has made him agree to the election.

Of all the disciples of Mahatma Gandhi he most resembles the dead Master in his goodness, affability, and love of the poor and of children. There is no doubt that this fundamental goodness and his profoundly religious disposition have endeared him to the people of India to an exceptional degree and given him a real hold over the country. He has the prestige of high virtue which brings the people of India to their knees. If ever in a moment of crisis he should make a personal appeal to the masses, they will listen to him. That is his strength. Has he also the strength to make bold decisions, braving the anger of people, striking hard when hard striking is essential? This may be doubted. The constitution gives to the President exceptional powers, especially emergency powers. It is certain that Rajen Babu will not use these powers as a more vigorous or more ambitious man would. Fundamentally conciliatory, he will rather attempt to keep people together than lead them forward.

Rajaji, his great protagonist, slips into privacy with the simplicity and austerity to which he is wedded—a modest home in a suburb of Madras, two of his children with him, and no personal staff. From that corner he will watch the political scene, of which he has so often been the storm center, with that curious mixture of brooding thoughtfulness and active, alert, interest which are his special note. But dramatic developments are always possible in India. He has a gift for daring and original solutions in exceptional situations. If the call should ever come, he will step forth.

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The Labor Movement

What Makes Lewis Tick?

YOU may freeze to death, you may not be able to get to work, you may not have any work to go to—all because of John L. Lewis. Still, you have to admit that the man is interesting—unpleasant perhaps, but interesting.

What makes the man tick? Is he motivated by a single-minded desire to improve the lot of the coal miner? Is he moved exclusively by a lust for power and importance? If you think you are going to get a simple, emphatic answer to those questions in this column, read no further. But if you could use a few guesses based on the man's record in the past and present altercations, this may be the place to look.

There is a case to be made for Lewis the Miner's Friend. Few people realize it, but as recently as 1939 wages and working conditions in the mines were bad. No other word will do. The work was hard and dangerous, as it will always be. But it was worse than that. It was brutal, because the danger was often unnecessary and the rewards did not measure up either to the difficulty or the danger.

Since 1939, as the result of a series of strikes that stopped for nobody and nothing, not even a nation at war, John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers have raised wages to the highest paid by any major industry in the country. And for the first time the miner who is maimed for life, the miner who is too old to work, the miner's widow who stands among her seven children waiting at the entrance to the mine while the rescue workers dig for the body of her husband—for the first time all these people enjoy the benefits of a health, welfare and pension fund.

In the old days the reporters and the newsreel men interviewed the widow at the mouth of the mine and took her picture. When you saw it in the paper or in the newsreel, between the showing of the funny picture with Bob Hope and the tragic one with Bette Davis, it was always good for a catch in the throat and maybe even a few tears from the married women.

But the widow and her children could not eat the stories in the newspapers or drink the tears that were shed for them in the movie theatres. They needed something more substantial. Of course the miners took up a collection. Sometimes it even covered the funeral expenses. The operators were not all cold and heartless, but it was a cutthroat, dog-eat-dog industry. What did you want them to do, go broke supporting ex-miners and their widows and children?

Lewis helped to change all that. The tactics he used were not learned in the eating clubs at Princeton or Harvard. Lewis did not eat with his knife at all. He threw it. Nevertheless, things were different afterwards and the widows and children were eating. With or without knives, it did not matter. They were eating.

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BUT other things were happening, too, as the result of these tactics. Lewis pulled the miners out so often and so long, and sometimes with so little to show for it, that it began to look as though Lewis's main demand was not more pay for the miners but more publicity for Lewis. And the miners lost a lot of wages.

This strike-happy policy was not lost on all the people who were hesitating between the choice of a coal furnace and an oil furnace, or on all the people who were hesitating between the choice of a steam engine and a Diesel. Oil and gas were coming up and they were coming up faster because of Lewis. Coal was going down. And there was less work for the miners.

Did that fact move Lewis to moderate his demands? Not at all. On the contrary. Right now he is asking a wage increase and a boost in the welfare fund that are between two and three times what Phil Murray and the Steelworkers were able to wring from the steel operators after a fairly strenuous strike of their own.

Until stopped by the courts, he was also asking for the continuation of a clause that would commit the miners to work only when they are "willing and able." In other words, you give us everything, but we give you nothing. For every union contract either states explicitly or assumes implicitly that the workers will give their labor in return for the wages and conditions provided in the contract.

Another fantastic demand Lewis made—and one which he has actually wrung from a number of small operators—is that the operators approve, as their own representative on the board which supervises the health and welfare fund, *a man who was picked out by John L. Lewis.* Plus a third, "impartial" member who was also picked out by Lewis and is partial toward him. Since Lewis himself is the third member, the composition of the board would in effect be Lewis, Lewis and Lewis.

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NOT so long ago the steel operators refused to accept the recommendations of a fact-finding board appointed by President Truman to sift the issues in the steel dispute. The recommendations were reasonable and the employers' reluctance to go along with them was rightly interpreted by many as having some relation to an arrogant unwillingness to yield their own will and their own opinion to the demands of the common good.

But Lewis went them one better. He refused even to accept the appointment of a fact-finding board.

Still, something must be said in his defense on this score. If he had accepted and sent the men back for 70 days, he would have lost all the advantage of a paper-thin coal supply and at the end of it all he would have

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had no assurance that the coal operators would not tell the board to go jump in the lake, just as the steel operators did. But it looks from here as though Lewis has lost more than he will gain from this maneuver. Certainly the maneuver itself is in line with that damn-the-public approach that has marked most of his campaigns, including both the victories and the defeats.

Finally, when we total up the black and red figures on the Lewis balance sheet we should never forget that everything about the man, including his tactics, is of one piece with the fact that he has fastened a one-man dictatorship on the United Mine Workers. Democracy has its weaknesses, but it also has its strength. And one aspect of its strength is that the distribution of power as between the top man and everybody else frequently prevents the top man from making an ass of himself. Lewis has shown that the old platitudes about absolute power are just as true as they ever were, and maybe a little truer.

To sum it all up, the guess here is that Lewis has succeeded in selling himself the idea that the interests of Lewis and the interests of his people are one and the same thing. Dictators usually do. Only God knows how much real concern there is in his heart and mind for the welfare of the coal miners and their wives and widows and children.

Only God knows how often John L. Lewis has preferred his own interests to those of the miners when there happened to be a conflict between them. But judging him strictly on the record, it looks as though Lewis beat out the miners almost every time.

JOHN C. CORT.

The Screen

Thunder in the Air

ONE must take a stand somewhere. One must draw a line past which one will not retreat." This statement by Cardinal Mindszenty is used in *"Guilty of Treason"* and sets the tone for the film depicting conditions in Hungary at the time of the arrest and trial of the Cardinal. Emmet Lavery wrote his script from the book *As We See Russia,* by members of the Overseas Press Club of America; and while this film, under the direction of Felix Feist, is hopped up at times and overmelodramatic, it effectively portrays the clash between the Soviet-controlled rulers and the democratic groups who dare to oppose them. The leading character is an American reporter (played with great sincerity by Paul Kelly) whose friends in Budapest include a schoolteacher (Bonita Granville) in love with a Soviet officer stationed in that city.

The story concentrates on the changes in this teacher's thinking after she realizes her strong anti-fascist position during the war led her into accepting the Communists, and after the reporter convinces her that "freedom is everybody's business." Furthermore her admiration for Cardinal Mindszenty (portrayed with strength and dignity by Charles Bickford) wins her to the fight against tyranny. Actually, although he has less footage, the Cardinal is the picture's main character; and the scenes in which he figures (at his farm, his sermon at the Christmas Mass, his arrest, the inquisition and the trial) are handled well and are deeply moving. Occasionally the Commies may remind you of the Nazi villains from movies made during the last war; however, "Guilty of Treason" condemns not the Russians, but the police state. The quotation from the film which opened this review concludes: "No matter what happens, we must speak for the truth. I am against tyranny—under all forms and all labels. Now, and as always, I pray for a world of charity and a world of justice."

No doubt *"Stromboli"* was also meant to be the story of a change that comes over a woman who survives a great emotional experience and is finally led to God. Unfortunately this film, as it is being shown in this country, is so confused and poorly edited that practically no story comes through and the characters' motivations must be guessed at. Although Producer-director Roberto Rossellini, who made the picture on the remote island of Stromboli in the Tyrrhenian Sea, disclaims responsibility for the version being shown here, it is not entirely fair to blame the American cutters and editors. The acting throughout is lifeless, and even Ingrid Bergman, who plays the lead, at times only walks through the role. We see this woman marry an Italian fisherman just to get out of a DP camp, and then we see her rebelling at conditions on the island where her husband lives. But why she could not accept this life (at least temporarily—which is what the priest suggests) and why when she is pregnant and trying to escape she changes her mind and suddenly believes in God, are questions that the film does not answer. The sound track, with its mixtures of Italian (without sub-titles), English and Italian-English is no great help. "Stromboli" has two magnificent scenes; one showing tuna fishing, and the other showing the inhabitants saying a litany in boats in the harbor while the volcano erupts. But the film's well-made travelogue assets do not compensate for the dull cinema or poorly executed plot.

"Three Came Home" is one of those rare films that tells a story of human suffering due to man's inhumanity to man but still manages to strengthen one's belief in the dignity of man. Its success, in spite of subject matter that could have become oversentimental or lurid with melodrama, is due to the fine script that Producer-writer Nunnally Johnson wrote from Agnes Newton Keith's book about her years in a Japanese prison camp, to the good direction of Jean Negulesco who stressed realism and understatement throughout, and to many excellent performances, especially those of Claudette Colbert as

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Mrs. Keith and Sessue Hayakawa as the colonel in charge of the Kuching prisons. It soon became obvious to Mrs. Keith, who with her young son was separated from her husband (Patric Knowles), that life in this dreadful camp under the Japanese was reduced to one purpose: to keep alive. At first she thought she hated all mankind for subjecting her to all this suffering. But through the years her attitude changed; and as important in this change as her fellow prisoners, who learned to help each other, was the Japanese commander, whose philosophy, though different from hers, took on meaning for her. "Three Came Home" is no fare for delicate moviegoers, but I recommend it strongly for those men of good will who oppose tyranny and war. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

The Stage

Come Back, Little Sheba

THE cry of William Inge's title is addressed to a small mutt dog that never appears on the unsightly scene—a lost dog. It is a cry called constantly and fruitlessly by the Wife of the piece and is a symbol of all the frustrations and defeats under view. Mr. Inge is concerned with a middle-aged American couple whose mistaken marriage has driven the man from disappointed ambition into struggling alcoholism, and the woman into a kind of warmed-over life which is patently no life at all. There is nothing whatever at work on the stage except the tattered remnants of love (although love indeed it is). Counterpointing this theme, the author has poised an amount of out-and-out sex in the persons of a young college-girl boarder and her various men. I think it is safe to say that the first act is merely a prelude to the several violences of the second.

Moreover, it is obviously safe to say that Mr. Inge has written a poor play on all counts. Nothing is neat, there are no motivated curtains, the contrast in the assorted drabnesses is never made really clear. But, somehow or other, the piece comes off as deeply serious—real—and s another instance proving that the Theatre is *not nothing*. I do not think the performances could be as movingly excellent as they are without some sympathy, some intelligence, existing between author and player. No one on the stage of the Booth is not wonderful. My choice hovers between Shirley Booth's frayed, timid, lazy, impossible, good Woman, and Sidney Blackmer's frayed, timid, angry, impossible, good Man. But there is honestly no written description to match this kind of skill and understanding. These people must be seen and heard to be judged, and I think they ought to be seen in Howard Bay's exact set, through whose dusty screen doors "Little Sheba" is so finally and sadly not expected to reappear. (*at the Booth*) KAPPO PHELAN.

Of Note

On Bishop Sheil

THE 1949 recipient of the Leo XIII Medal, annual award given by the Sheil School of Social Studies in Chicago, was Samuel Cardinal Stritch, Archbishop of Chicago. The following excerpts are from the Cardinal's acceptance speech.

There is one man who, having the sense of Christ's presence in the Church and the work of the Church is doing so many things that even the Cardinal Archbishop has found it difficult to keep informed on all his activities.

In Bishop Sheil I would say there exist two outstanding qualities. The first I would call fecundity. For so prolific are his activities in behalf of the underprivileged that some of us can never be quite sure what's coming next.

His second outstanding quality is related to the virtue of fortitude. It is a quality of zeal, of what I would call daring.

Some of us possess prudence, others fortitude. Some saints have different virtues than others. The virtues of the Popes differ also.

Many things would never be accomplished without daring. God wants certain things to be done which cannot wait on the virtue of prudence.

Bishop Sheil's resources of fecundity and daring have served him well in his long and unswerving devotion to the under-privileged.

His relationship with the underprivileged has always been the sound, Christian one—and that is no easy task. In that great Catholic novel *I Promessi Sposi* by Manzoni, there is a paragraph which illustrates the true Christian attitude toward the poor. Said Manzoni: "There are many who will put on an apron and serve the poor at table, but there are few who will sit down and eat with them."

Bishop Sheil in his work with the poor has not made the mistake of many modern social workers—that of treating the underprivileged as sub-normal. He knows that poor children, for example, are usually quite normal and need to be treated as normal beings in a normal atmosphere.

His work with grown-ups in the Sheil School of Social Studies has a worth that cannot be immediately recognized. In the Sheil School there have taken place accomplishments in the minds and spirits of adults which perhaps will not be apparent for years. . . .

And the manner of presentation of knowledge to adults is very important. The very educated can be very boring to ordinary people. . . .

Thus the need of the right kind of adult education such as we have in the Sheil School.

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From the Heart

Vincent Van Gogh: People's Choice

David Burnham

VINCENT VAN GOGH during his brief life completed about 1,700 drawings and paintings. He sold one, perhaps two, for a total of less than a hundred dollars.

During the current winter, 59 years after his death, 30,000 people a week have paid 50 cents to pass the turnstile into the specially-decorated wing of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art where one-tenth of Van Gogh's crop has been on display; most of these have paid another ten cents to watch a movie about Van Gogh in an improvised theater on the floor below. Now the show has moved on to Chicago's Art Institute. The majority of the paintings in the show, inherited by Van Gogh's nephew or owned by the Netherlands Government, have never been offered for sale. Judging from recent auction prices, the best of them would fetch over $100,000 apiece, and the value of Van Gogh's total output has been estimated at $30,000,000.

More significant than these was a show which would have pleased Vincent much more: the display of color reproductions of his paintings in the front window of Woolworth's chief Manhattan dime-store. Inside, a special counter in addition to a large share of the "Art" counter was given over to his reproductions. The prints surrounding them were what you would expect: academic flower arrangements, duck shooters, pussy-cats, sleeping babies, glamorized ballerinas, romanticized sailing vessels. Against these classic examples of middle-class taste was opposed, for example, an awry rendering of a cheap cane chair in the Spartan bedroom where Van Gogh lost his mind.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art doesn't take chances. Nor does Woolworth's allot window space quixotically. The Metropolitan-Art Institute show and the Woolworth merchandizing are symptoms rather than causes of Van Gogh's mass popularity.

Twenty-five years ago, Van Gogh was virtually unknown to the general public. In 1933, Harcourt Brace risked a cheaper edition of Julius Meier-Graefe's impressionistic study of Van Gogh, until then available only in a limited de luxe translation. The next year, Irving Stone popularized Van Gogh's tragic career in *Lust for Life,* which quickly became a best-seller. In 1935, New York's Museum of Modern Art presented the first one-man show of Van Gogh's paintings, which later toured the country and was visited by 900,000 people. Since then, many editions of Van Gogh's soul-baring letters to his brother Theo have been published, as well as many, many studies of his work and personality. Most importantly, print-makers of Europe and America have turned out innumerable color reproductions of his paintings—at first at high prices, today selling in Woolworth's basement for as little as 79 cents, including handsome frames.

Why? Has popular taste finally accepted "modern" painting? Van Gogh's subjects are recognizable but always distorted. His colors and perspective are arbitrary, expressing emotion rather than actuality. His figures, whether human or inanimate, are twisted, convoluted, usually demarcated by heavy black outlines which have no reflection in nature. Sunflowers become suns; stars become comets; cypresses are torches.

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THE superficial explanation argued for Van Gogh's mass popularity is the appeal of his highly-publicized life history. Son of a provincial Dutch pastor, he worked for a time as an underling in the Dutch, English, and French branches of a firm of art dealers. A failure as an art salesman—and meanwhile several times a tragic failure as a suitor—he turned to his father's profession. But there his excessive enthusiasm, and especially his exaggerated sympathy for the downtrodden, precipitated a second failure. Found undesirable even as an unpaid lay preacher to the pauperized Belgian miners, he tried to communicate his sympathy for the miners by making somber drawings which he optimistically hoped to sell to English and American illustrated magazines.

His brother Theo, manager of the gallery in Paris where Vincent had flunked, persuaded him to join him. In Paris, Vincent partly repaired his ruined health (ruined because he insisted upon sharing the miners' lot) and met the impressionist painters whom Theo, ignoring the conservative traditions of his firm, championed. From these Vincent learned to see in a new way—to see color; his somber dark northern browns and blues gave way to brilliant outdoor hues.

But he couldn't stick the ingrown café art of Paris. He went south, to Provence where the sun is like a shout. Gauguin, with whom he had become intimate in Paris, joined him there; shared his lodgings; quarreled with him; finally was chased down the street by Van Gogh brandishing an open razor. Out of remorse, Van Gogh slashed off an ear (so say the romantic biographers; more exactly, it would seem, he slashed off the lobe of his ear, but the bleeding was no less), wrapped it in painter's canvas and left it like a nosegay on the doorstep of a local prostitute. Gauguin fled to Paris; Vincent was committed to an asylum, was released, recommitted, transferred; meanwhile he was allowed to paint during lucid periods, and many of the reproductions now on sale at Woolworth's are from paintings he made during these intermissions of semi-sanity.

Here, certainly, is the quintessence of the misunderstood genius, feeling too deeply, loving too hard; driven by the public's misunderstanding into poverty, neglect, madness, finally into suicide at the age of 37.

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And yet, to choose the obvious parallel, his defaulting colleague Gauguin was equally the romantic rebel. Abruptly, at 35, Gauguin deserted job, wife, children, all the bourgeois conventions to devote himself to always unlucrative painting. Halfway across the world (first Martinique, later Tahiti) he pursued personal and artistic freedom, died prematurely of disease caused by "romantic" excesses. Again like Van Gogh, his life supplied the material for a best-seller, Somerset Maugham's *The Moon and Sixpence*. Reproductions of his Polynesian paintings are recommended by interior decorators because of the decorative value of their broad color areas. But the general public is estranged by Gauguin's intellectuality. However Bohemian his life became, Gauguin always painted from the mind; whereas Van Gogh painted from the heart.

★

UNDOUBTEDLY, many *have* been drawn to Van Gogh's paintings through the appeal of his biography. Yet the man or woman who buys a Van Gogh reproduction at Woolworth's isn't, in most cases, buying a "Van Gogh reproduction." On some of the reproductions, a signature, "Vincent," is visible. But there is no label stating that this is a reproduction of a painting by Vincent Van Gogh, 1853-1890.

The Woolworth shopper, it would seem, buys Van Gogh reproductions for one or both of two reasons. The first is his colorfulness. At the Metropolitan show, the rooms which displayed his prints and low-keyed water colors were relatively deserted, and so was the room of his early dark oils. The public congregated in the galleries where his sun-struck Provence oils were on show. One, two, three generations ago, color in art was suspect; the popular paintings had an overall brownness. Interior decorating, clothing, automobiles were equally drab. Within the present generation, color has invaded every area of life. Radios, kitchen utensils, dining-table coverings, neckties, wallpapers, even toilet paper have blossomed out in vivid color. However unrecognized, it was undoubtedly the impressionists and after them the post-impressionists and after those the post-post-impressionists who provided the impetus for this revolution in taste.

The general public, though, has adopted few of these painters, however colorful. Matisse, for example, is even more extravagant of color than Van Gogh, combines colors more decoratively and with greater variety. But he, like Gauguin, is tainted with an intellectuality that repels the public. The modern expressionist school, like Van Gogh, uses color to convey emotion. Yet there is this difference: the expressionists translate their private emotion in face of a certain subject; Van Gogh conveyed the emotion he felt to be resident in the subject itself. Consider his painting of the café in Arles near which he lived; he attempted "to express the terrible passions of humanity . . . I have tried to express the idea that the café is a place where one can ruin one's self, run mad or commit a crime . . . an atmosphere like a devil's furnace of pale sulphur."

Always, Van Gogh painted for the common man—even though he never succeeded in reaching the common man during his lifetime. His painting was a substitute for his failure to touch and move human beings through personal love and direct preaching. What his paintings preached was not the wonderful order of the universe, comprehended through a complicated cerebral process, but the intensity of its individual manifestations.

This is the second reason why the public buys Van Gogh prints—the compulsive vitality of his paintings. Today's public, like yesterday's, wants to find a story in a painting. Every Van Gogh painting is a chapter of romantic autobiography, with just enough realism joined to the romanticism to make it palatable.

To repeat the question: does the present popularity of Van Gogh indicate that mass taste has become reconciled to modern painting? No. The mass taste has been led by modern painting to accept color—rather too wholeheartedly, a survey of the neckties worn by one's fellow passengers on the subway or the sports costumes worn to Jones Beach is likely to indicate. It accepts distortion in painting as against the photographic realism which its fathers admired. But its fathers also paid extravagant admiration to, for example, Gainsborough's "Blue Boy" which owes its appeal essentially to distortion for a "stylish" effect. Distortion is still not accepted when its justification is purely formal, nor is expressionism accepted when it deviates too far from the recognizable.

During their lifetime, deviational characters like Van Gogh are outcasts. After they die, it is safe to admire, even to envy their departures from the conventional norm. Too-intense paintings are equally shunned while their creator is alive. The intensity survives the creator. Vincent Van Gogh is no longer a controversial "modern." Modern art today connotes non-representational art—paintings issuing from the brain. Now as always, the public doesn't like to think. But it can still now and then feel; and Van Gogh, even in insanity, was able to an outstanding degree to translate into vivid pictorial images the deepest feeling called forth by a field, a face, a sky, a building. Whatever his ultimate rank in the hierarchy of art, Van Gogh painted as and for one of the people. And the people, after a half century of neglect, are rendering him belated homage.

Books

Decision in Germany. General Lucius D. Clay. Doubleday. $4.50.

THIS is a remarkable account of four years of American activity in Germany, a clean and sober report of illusions and accomplishments. Most of the facts are well-known to American newspaper readers, but only a few people have acquired a well-rounded picture of the wrong ideas with which the Occupation army approached its task and the bitterly realistic insight gained in the course of the Occupation.

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General Clay tells with disarming frankness that when he took over in the spring of 1945, he did not foresee the problems of the coming years: that the four countries which had fought to victory in a common cause would be unable to cooperate in peace, that the Kremlin would try to maneuver its Western allies out of the former capital of the Reich and strive to provide everywhere in Germany opportunities for Communist penetration and for Soviet domination of Germany's economic resources and political life. How these circumstances forced the West to the heroic adventure of the airlift and the formation of a West German government gives a certain unintended tension to General Clay's slightly dry report.

It is interesting to learn—and no doubt partial explanation for Roosevelt's acceptance of the impractical and unethical Morgenthau Plan—that the President, who had attended school in Germany, had acquired an early distaste for the German character. He believed it to be arrogant and provincial. It is characteristic of the hysteria in the days of total victory that Roosevelt intended to ask Clay what action he would take in the occupied cities if there should be a series of murders of American soldiers by unknown hands. The same question was later considered in Clay's staff discussions about steps to be taken in the case of German resistance. Suggestions ranged from destruction by fire of the city blocks in which gun shots originated to execution of hostages. It is fortunate that the Germans abstained from any further resistance and the American Army was not impelled to start re-education in democracy with Nazi methods.

If one remembers that in the summer of 1941 the American President and the British Prime Minister, meeting "somewhere in the Atlantic," promised that the victors would afford to the people of all nations the means for dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, free of fear and want, then the results of our peace policy seem not at all brilliant. General Clay's fair and sober report makes one realize how many of the causes of this development were forced upon the Americans, who were very slow in facing the new situation, sentimentally reluctant to accept a former ally as a potential enemy. Against their own will the Americans were involved in the airlift to save Berlin from brutal Bolshevization. This brilliant fight for freedom crowns the history of our trials and errors in Germany.

Clay's book abstains from all tricks of dramatization and scorn of enemies. It is written in the dignified tenor of a responsible statesman. It treats shortly such sensational affairs as the terror against the Malmedy suspects and the reduced sentence of Mrs. Koch, aware that these will seem trifles to future historians. General Clay is not afraid to admit that he may have erred in judgment, but he consoles himself with the reflection that it was a valuable lesson in democracy for the Germans to learn that even a powerful representative of the United States has to exercise his responsibilities in the bright light of public discussion.

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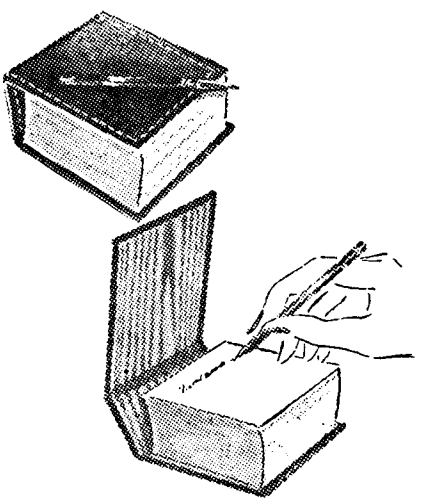

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The Verse in English of Richard Crashaw. Grove Press. $1.25.

THIS is the second reprint in a series of books that may be described as much written about but little read. The first was Herman Melville's *The Confidence Man* and the third will be *The Selected Writings of Mrs. Aphra Behn.* There are of course many other series of reprints at low prices, but they only include works for which a large sale can be expected; the Grove Press enterprise supposes that its reprints are not likely to get a very wide distribution, so it attempts to solve the problem by producing its books in the "continental" fashion by providing only a cardboard binding, which can be replaced by cloth or leather by those who wish it, but which makes no concessions to shoddiness of type or paper or even size. These are books that will find a place on the shelves of scholars, and which should be in every self-respecting library. I heartily commend the venture, especially as the selections promise to be so varied.

Who the editor is does not appear, but he has done his job well in providing an accurate and a complete text, with only a very few small changes in punctuation, but he makes no attempt to compete with the definitive *Variorum* edition by Professor L. C. Martin issued by the Oxford University Press in 1927; his aim is simpler and more practical. Even so, I think we were entitled to have had a few more notes, and the "Crashaw Chronology"—a catena of critical comments running from Thomas Car in 1652 to Yvor Winters in 1937 — might, it seems to me, have made some mention of the Eric Shepherd edition in 1914 of Crashaw's Religious Poems with such amusing side remarks as one might expect from the author of *Murder in a Nunnery.* One must not say that any anti-Catholic prejudice operated here—for Patmore and Francis Thompson are cited, as is Alexander Pope, but there may have been a prejudice against a book that was edited by a man hardly out of Oxford, full of high spirits and not a solemn scholar.

But what am I to say after Cowley's apostrophe:

Poet and *Saint!* to thee alone are given
The two most sacred Names of Earth and Heaven,

or after Pope's moderately expressed reproach of writers who try to attract attention by the far-fetched, of "inconsiderate authors who would rather be admired than understood"? Only this: I do not believe Crashaw could have written in any other way: his *was* an odd mind, as the mind of Father Hopkins (a much more piercing writer) was also odd and who was unintelligible only because he had such difficult and complicated thoughts to express. Yes, I will cite again the lines in the long poem on St. Mary Magdalen, describing her eyes as:

Two walking baths; two weeping motions;
Portable and compendious oceans.

I will not cite, however, the conclusion of the third of his poems on St. Teresa—that beginning "O thou undaunted daughter of desires"—except to express my conviction that these are among the most splendid lines in the language.

The truth is that Richard Crashaw could not keep it up: he wrote, when at his best, superbly; but even when

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at his worst he wrote with a *distinguished* badness, and this makes him almost unique among poets. Though the same thing could be said of some of the other men of his century—of Donne, occasionally, of Dryden, when he was young, and of the Churchill whose contribution to the volume on young Edward King containing *Lycidas* sometimes out-Crashaws Crashaw—of nobody can this be said so truly as of Crashaw himself. There is no doubt that he will always be read, which is why this volume should be hastily secured; but there is also no doubt that he will always remain among the curiosities as well as the magnificences of English poetry.

THEODORE MAYNARD.

The Canon of the Mass: Its History, Theology and Art. Jerome Gassner, O.S.B. Herder. $5.00.

THE flood of liturgical literature inundating the book market is a sign that the liturgy is being more carefully studied and the demand for information is steadily growing. The abysmal ignorance so common among our own in matters liturgical is now being remedied and Father Gassner's monograph makes a very original contribution. His title gives us precisely his approach, one different from the usual books of this kind.

His ambition is neither a cut and dried historical treatise nor theology pure and simple. The charm and value of his work do not lie in the exact and scientific results of his scholarship (although I suspect he has dug up more hints and problems for the profession than one would suspect) but in a warm, devout, rational *theoria,* a grasp of the relationships between heaven, sacrament, Jerusalem, liturgy and apocalyptic prophecy, achieved by no modern author before him.

The guild of liturgical historians may object to some of his hypotheses, but the priest, the layman, the theologian, the "God-speaker," will be delighted at the ease with which he channels Greek, Oriental and Patristic Christian thought into the land of Roman liturgy and lets a whole fresh and green vegetation sprout.

What about COMMONWEAL readers? Is this book only for initiated, esoteric groups tiptoeing at the fringe of life, abhorring the dreary smell of our depressed and depressing usages the land over? By no means: teachers, young couples, collegiate groups, the young clergy and parishioners should study the book together. Its inspirational force can be tremendous. H. A. REINHOLD.

Of Fear and Freedom. Carlo Levi. Farrar Straus. $2.75.

THAT the author himself was aware of the basic weakness of the essays comprising *Of Fear and Freedom* is attested to by his judicious unwillingness to publish them at the time of composition. An acknowledged fragmentary work, it is interesting only as a direct expression of the beliefs and values of the enigmatic figure

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of Carlo Levi which so skillfully emerged from the pages of *Christ Stopped at Eboli.*

The tenor of the book is conveyed far better by the original title, *The Fear of Freedom,* than by the rather generic English translation. It is this fear, its birth, and its assumed forms, more than the idea of liberty, that Levi discusses in eight brief chapters. This fear, he says, is rooted in the dark nature of man; it is necessary for all forms of creation; it is the immanent horror of formlessness which destroys and creates all ideologies, religions, arts: all cultures.

However, such problems cannot be discussed with finality in some 130 pages. Necessarily the tone becomes that of the oracle and the style adapts itself. For with the oracle there is statement, not discussion; intuition, not examination; and pervading all things a sense of ambiguous mystery. If the oracle is accepted, the listener will be instructed; if not, at least he will be interested. This reviewer was interested.

Two problems trouble the author most: the problem of the mentality of the masses and the problem of sin. The problem of the masses is not dealt with in an historical manner, as it has been so brilliantly by Ortega, but in a hybrid metaphysical fashion that is irreducibly metaphoric.

Sin is reduced, through a hermetic dialectic, to a necessary moment for the conquest of freedom in a religious sense. Regrettably, even as poetry this is not genuine, and for vigor of thought one looks in vain for such a solid base as that evidenced in that distantly related work, Max Picard's superb *The Hitler in Ourselves.*

The weakest essay in the book is that dealing with the Muses. Here one wishes that Levi had followed modern aesthetic writers in Italy, for whatever their faults, lack of clarity and directness are not among them. Perhaps, however, clarity is an elusive virtue for an oracle.

The translation, all in all, is adequate, considering the difficulty of the text. Indeed, the translator has been even too successful in capturing the spirit of the work, for in his preface he speaks of this "Latin song of Adam written in the style of the Mediterranean," a cryptic phrase, defiant and impervious to all powers of analysis.

SERGE HUGHES.

Paterson. (*Books* 1 & 2). *William Carlos Williams. New Directions.* $1.50.
Paterson. (*Book* 3). *William Carlos Williams. New Directions.* $3.00.
William Carlos Williams. Vivienne Koch. New Directions. $2.00.

IT'S ABOUT time they held a Doc Williams Week over in Rutherford, New Jersey; after all, he's a native son who has lived there all his life, serving the community as a general practitioner and a pediatrician. But maybe they're sore at him for devoting his longest poem to the nearby city of Paterson. However, New Directions has cooked up a little fiesta on its own; hav-

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ing published the third of "Paterson's" four books in December, this firm has gone on to reissue the first two books in one volume of its New Classics Series and to devote a volume in its Makers of Modern Literature Series to a full-length study of Williams' work in verse and prose by Vivienne Koch.

Before approaching *Paterson* the book, one should know something about Paterson the city; the entry in the *Encyclopedia Americana* is ideal for the purpose—full of details that are already a kind of poetry. But let Dr. Williams tell it:

> Paterson lies in the valley under the Passaic Falls
> its spent waters forming the outline of his back. He
> lies on his right side, head near the thunder
> of the waters filling his dreams!
>
> * * * *
>
> And there against him, stretches the low mountain.
> The Park's her head, carved, above the Falls, by
> the quiet river . . .

In a prose "Author's Note" he informs us further that "a man in himself is a city, beginning, seeking, achieving and concluding his life in ways which the various aspects of a city may embody—if imaginatively conceived—any city, all the details of which may be made to voice his most intimate convictions."

Just as Joyce made the environs of Dublin a microcosm symbolic of all human history, so Williams symbolizes a man's history (his own?) via the microcosm of Paterson. From two readings of what is admittedly only three quarters of the poem, I feel that "Finnegans Wake" is more nearly a success than "Paterson." To me, the prose extracts which interrupt and illustrate Williams' verse are more truly poetry than the verse itself. They present concrete particulars, whereas the verse too often deals in abstractions—in striking contrast to so much of Williams' earlier verse. Book Three is the least satisfactory—giving the impression that Williams is writing a poem about how difficult it is to write a poem. In fact, says Williams, "the brunt of the four books . . . is a search for the redeeming language by which a man's premature death . . . and the woman's (the man's) failure to hold him (her) might have been prevented." This redeeming language appears to be symbolized by the sound of the Falls. "The poet alone holds the key to their final rescue." All of which seems to me to say that human consciousness can change human consciousness by direct action.

Miss Koch's study is divided into four parts—dealing with the poems, the plays, the novels and short stories, and the prose other than fiction, in that order. Each section discusses Williams' output in the particular form chronologically, and there is not much cross-reference between the sections. The book strikes me as painstaking, but not specially illuminating. It did, however, make me feel that I ought to read some of the novels and short stories. Some of the analysis of the first two books of "Paterson" was helpful too. In any case, most readers will find Book Two, the realistic "Sunday in the Park," by far the easiest to follow of the three books of "Paterson."

VIVIAN MERCIER.

St. Paul lives again in

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by Mary Fabyan Windeatt

If you missed reading this review that appeared in *Books on Trial,* here is a chance not to miss it!

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"Unbidden the thought comes here and now to whisper to David Selznick and to Arthur Rank that *The Man on Fire* could be made a sure success on the screen. The story is so dramatic, so vibrant, so romanesque and yet so true, that they would run no risk. To the reader of *Books on Trial* I beg leave to recommend unreservedly the gripping, true-to-life story of one of the greatest men who ever lived—Saint Paul, the Man on Fire."

Review by Rev. J. M. Lelen

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A Few Flowers For Shiner. Richard Llewellyn. Macmillan. $3.00.

RICHARD LLEWELLYN has a radiant faith in the nobility of the working people of the world. He writes about them with the tenderness that made his first novel, *How Green Was My Valley,* a thing of rare delight. In his latest book, *A Few Flowers for Shiner,* he unfortunately adulterates the ingredients.

Snowy, a mechanic from London, and Bill, his medium-hard-boiled mate from Lancashire are still there, warm and humorous—but along with them come an erupting volcano, a band of international deserters, an American-born Princess, and a stolen truck.

Snowy and Bill are on leave from the Eighth Army in wartime Italy. As they travel south from the battle-front they acquire a truckful of miscellaneous hitch-hiking characters. With each new experience, their understanding of other people widens, and gradually even the "Eyeties" of their insular stereotype become sympathetic human beings.

But once their truck is stolen, the nature of the story changes. A fast-paced and jumbled chase of the criminals drains the vitality of the characters. The author's continued probings into their feelings seem arbitrary interludes in the action. That Snowy, particularly, retains his stature throughout the melee is a triumph over overwhelming plot-created obstacles.

Italy is the setting of the novel, but for all the descriptions of vivid landscape and colorful population, it remains a one-dimensional backdrop. What comes alive is England—the sights and smells of London and Lancashire in the memories of the homesick soldiers. The remembered solidity of home is far more real to Snowy and Bill than the fantastic adventures they stumble into in this cardboard land, and the reader comes to wish as devoutly as they that the Army and the author would send them back to England.

At his best, Mr. Llewellyn writes with beauty and sensitivity. But far too often his poetic insights become submerged in obscure and confused ramblings. The dialogue alone remains tough, colorful, and explicit.

CAROL H. WEISS.

• REVIEWERS •

MAX FISCHER teaches at the New School for Social Research in New York.

THEODORE MAYNARD has written many volumes of poetry, history and biography. Among his well known books is *Too Small a World.*

REV. H. A. REINHOLD is pastor of St. Joseph's Church, Sunnyside, Washington.

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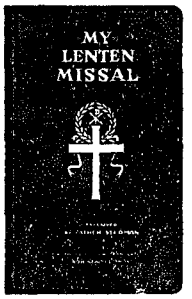

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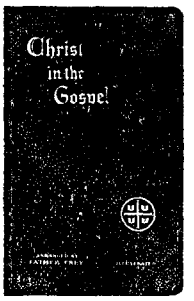

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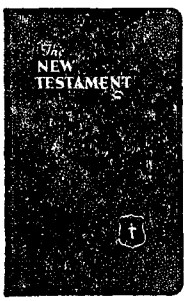

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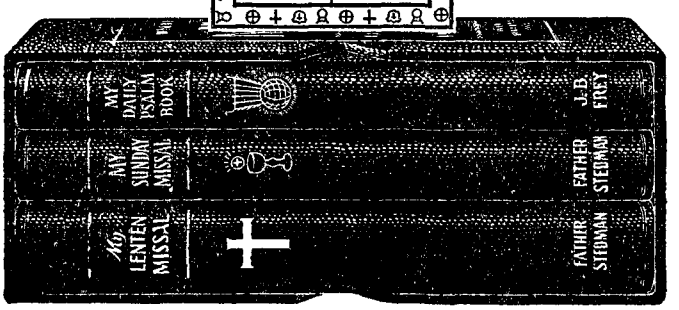

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